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J. D. Robinson*

Anniversary Address:

DELIVERED AT THE BAPTIST CHURCH, NORTH ADAMS, MASS.,

BY

JAMES T. ROBINSON,

JULY 4, 1865.



National Anniversary Address,

BY

JAMES T. ROBINSON,

DELIVERED AT THE BAPTIST CHURCH,

North Adams, Mass., July 4th, 1865.

NORTH ADAMS:
W. H. PHILLIPS, PRINTER.
1865.

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NORTH ADAMS, MASS., July 5, 1865.

HON. JAMES T. ROBINSON: Sir:—The undersigned having listened with profound interest to the able and eloquent Oration which you delivered in this place on the 4th day of July, 1865, and believing that its truthful expositions call for a wide circulation, and that the public will be gratified with its perusal, would respectfully solicit a copy for publication.

Very respectfully, &c.,

MILES SANFORD,
SHERMAN M. MERRILL,
L. M. BURRINGTON,
S. JOHNSON,
S. BURLINGAME,
R. H. WELLS,
JOHN B. TYLER,
W. W. FREEMAN,
E. S. WILKINSON,
EDWIN ROGERS,
EDWARD R. TINKER,
EDWIN THAYER,
A. G. POTTER,
S. THAYER,
JOHN F. ARNOLD,
H. S. MILLARD,
E. D. WHITAKER,
WM. MARTIN.

NORTH ADAMS, July 6, 1865.

REV. MILES SANFORD, AND OTHERS: Gentlemen:—The address is at your service. Although hastily written, as you well know, still its sentiments are not hastily entertained, and if their wider diffusion will contribute, in the smallest degree, towards that "eternal vigilance which is the price of liberty," I shall be amply compensated. Thanking you for the kind terms of your invitation, I remain,

Very truly yours,

JAMES T. ROBINSON.

A D D R E S S .

FELLOW CITIZENS: You have a right to rejoice. These jubilant cannon are none too loud. These bells and flags, these songs and shouts and swelling festal music, are none too glad and gay for such an hour as this. No joy can be too great for a Nation saved, a Republic redeemed, a slaveholding, man-hating conspiracy smote to dust.

Now we know the sweet and bitter in the cup of national experience, which has been pressed to the lips of every great people. We know the unutterable agonies of defeat, and the bliss and splendor of victory. Now we know the meaning of those wild shouts which burst from the lips of Athens, when the news of victory came from Marathon, Salamis and Platea—Xerxes and his Persian hordes had been beaten and rolled back and the civilization of Greece saved from destruction. The light of those victories streams upon your faces to-day, through the mists of more than twenty centuries.

No wonder they crowded those beautiful temples to celebrate their joy. No wonder they welcomed the victors with crowns and wreaths, and triumphal arches, and songs—with tears and worship.

We can now understand the emotions which swelled the breasts of the Fathers when the Eagles of victory perched upon their flag at Yorktown, and why they strewed the return of Washington and his heroes with flowers. We now have a victory grander than

theirs, and heroes uncounted to bless and honor, and HAD, alas, a Father and Savior equal to Washington; and we have a country, majestic Mother and Guardian of us all, snatched from more than British or Persian bondage.

We stand to-day bathed in the splendor of two eras—the era of '76 and the era of '65—the era of birth and the era of manhood. Our Fathers broke the yoke of Britain, you have broken the yoke of the slaveholders.

The promise of the Revolution is fulfilled. The Declaration of Jefferson has blossomed in the Proclamation of Lincoln. The cannon of '65 have blown to atoms what the cannon of '76 only wounded.

And, fellow citizens, this last four years' struggle, from which we have just emerged, has been only a continuation and completion of the Revolutionary war. The interval of peace since the Revolution has been but a long truce and pause, in which each side has been unconsciously preparing for the final tug, which now is ended.

There lurked in that victory of the Revolution a deception and a mockery. The principle of liberty seemed to have secured a perfect success, but unfortunately despotism and barbarism were concealed under the form of African slavery. This element, whose ultimate tendencies our Fathers did not comprehend, sought and obtained recognition and support in the new Government they founded.

How short-sighted are mortals! The cloud, which then was no bigger than a man's hand, has for the last four years covered our whole heavens with the blackness of darkness. A few words in the Constitution of '87, then thought to be harmless, in '65 are a blood-soaked continent, a million of fresh graves, and a debt of three thousand millions of dollars. Then, a dash of the pen could have destroyed it, now, it takes a million of bayonets and four awful years.

However, let us not quarrel with destiny, but try to learn the great lesson of this war; for it has a lesson, of unspeakable moment to us and all men, forever more.

What then is the meaning of this tremendous war; what is the value of this transcendent victory; and what the future it opens for us and mankind? To me the great lesson of this war is as plain as though written across the heavens.

First, It is Punishment, Retribution for National guilt and crime, North and South.

Second, It is the exposure of the nature and tendencies of oppression, in contrast with the illustration of the nature and tendencies of liberty.

Third, It is the vindication and test of popular government, and its final establishment on immovable foundations, as the normal and ultimate government for the human race.

It seems that the fullness of time had come for this last trial and test of Free Institutions. For you will not forget that we had passed successfully all other trials but this—the trial of battle.

For over two hundred years, ever since the arrival of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, and the arrival of that slave ship at Jamestown, the same year, the civil rivalry and contest between two opposite ideas and policies of government had been going on. Those two ships brought in their cabins this very war and all the long train of events which preceded it. From the great battle fields of Europe, where they had been contending for centuries, these warring forces came. Freedom—Democracy, the Church, the School, the Town Meeting—came in the May Flower, and commenced their career upon the rock of Plymouth in mid winter; while Aristocracy,—the Despotism of the Plantation—came in the Slave Ship and began upon the fat bottom lands of Virginia. Thus you see in the beginning, Tyranny had the advantage of the fairest portion of the continent,—the best sun, sky and stars—while Freedom was put upon the ice and granite of New England. Thus they began and grew, each in its own sphere, until 1860, when the contest terminated. What was the result, you all know. Despotism was beaten everywhere—in agriculture, in the arts, in industry, in commerce, in literature, in growth, in peace, happiness and power. From the Atlantic to the Pacific, on the Northern border of the continent, stretched one grand tier of mighty, populous States and Empires, robust with material vigor, glittering with cities and spires and domes, abounding in wealth and culture, resounding with labor and the shouts of advancing millions, opening new eras with hymns of lofty cheer. It was a mixture of races, a muster of nations. The sun never shone upon such progress, such happiness, such peace, such power, such splendor and promise.

On the other hand, from the Potomac to the Gulf, stretched another line of States. There you saw decayed Virginias, rotten Car-

olinas, and barbarous Arkansas. There was darkness, cruelty, violence, wretchedness,—the civilization of the bowie knife and the pistol. Behind the age and behind all ages, in agriculture, the arts, schools, general intelligence, and all the elements of true prosperity, they gradually sunk in the scale, until the entire group of States were converted into brutal Despotisms—the Middle Ages come again—Turkey and Austria combined—surpassing in cruelty Naples under Bomba, lower than Italy in the eleventh century, in point of civilization.

But one other advantage despotism enjoyed which I need not mention, because of its connection with subsequent events. During all this industrial, moral, and political contest, the slaveholder had the control of the General Government, or for the last fifty years. By this means they sought to arrest the progress of freedom and the decline of aristocracy. To this end they wielded all the vast treasure and patronage of the Government. They waged war, conquered and annexed territory, and admitted new slave States. They ostracised and persecuted the friends of liberty, passed brutal statutes and laws, and enforced them at the point of the bayonet. But “the stars in their courses fought against Sisera.” Freedom protested and suffered, wrote and spoke, and organized popular agitation and enlightenment, and waited through long and bitter years, till at last, the indignant millions rose in their wrath and might, and with the Ballot smote to the dust the Babylon their ambition had builded, elected Abraham Lincoln President of the United States, and took possession of their own government.

This ended the contest in the utter overthrow of aristocracy and the complete triumph of liberty everywhere. Now, perhaps, you can understand why Despotism was permitted to occupy the best portion of this continent and have control of our government so long. It would seem that it was so ordained, to make their defeat more signal when it came, and our victory and superiority more manifest.

And now opens another trial and test. So far, Liberty is the victor. This success was noted and marked in Europe by the Despots. The man-stealers here saw and trembled. To submit to this victory, was to submit to destruction, and hence this war; hence this greatest of conspiracies against National life and the rights of man. For years, it seems, the Slaveholders had feared this result, and had been preparing to resist it when it should come. “For

thirty years," said Barnwell Rhett of Carolina, "we plotted disunion."

Having the control of the general government they filled the foreign diplomatic posts with their tools and agents. Through these, they gradually drew into their plot all the despotic and aristocratic elements of Europe. The great Republic, it seems, was too great for their comfort and peace. The example of such success was contagious and dangerous. It kindled revolutions and shook their thrones. The sparks from our fire were continually dropping into their powder-house. Besides, this was the last Republic, on a large scale, left upon the Earth. The tyrants had succeeded against every other attempt.

Napoleon, that terrible enigma of crime and success, stood upon the necks of the French people. Hungary lay prostrate at the feet of Austria, and Italy, though recovering, was still under hereditary rule. Victor Hugo was an exile in Jersey, Kossuth and Mazzini and Louis Blanc, and other popular chiefs, were hiding in London, while Garibaldi was alone and wounded on his island home, his lion heart a prey to despair, and his magic sword rusting upon the wall. Everywhere Tyranny was triumphant. Clearly, there was no hope for free government except upon these shores. If this experiment could be destroyed, despotism might hope for quiet for ages to come; for if we failed, with all our advantages, the question would be settled. Thus hate and fear combined to lure them into the conspiracy. The alliance was formed. The characters of the great tragedy of the age, to be enacted upon a continental theatre, were cast, and on the twelfth day of April, 1861, the curtain was lifted, the fatal shot upon Sumter was fired, blood was sprinkled in the faces of the Southern masses, and the drama opened. Now mark the breadth and scope of the Providential design. Freedom is to be put to the last dread trial. It was not enough to triumph in the civil contest; the question still remained, can freemen fight as well as aristocrats and tyrants; can they surrender sons, and fathers, and brothers to the sacrifice; can they manage great armies; will they vote to tax themselves; to draft themselves; will they volunteer? The time has come—can the Republic stand against domestic treason and foreign intrigue, before which all other Republics have gone down. This was the last objection of tyrants yet unanswered by our career. In the progress of events, the time had come, when the interests of humanity required a final answer.

But how dreadful was the peril? Look at the vast, colossal conspiracy!

First, There were the slaveholders, holding in their grasp the organic power of fifteen States, with six millions of maddened people, and four millions of slaves to do their work.

Second, The Northern allies, known now and forever as Copperheads. They were in our midst, secret spies and traitors, upon whom the rebels relied for aid, and who did not disappoint them.

Third, England and France, and all the liberty-hating elements of Europe, to supply them with sympathy, opinion, money, cannon, commissary stores—everything they needed—and at the proper time, official and governmental recognition and alliance.

What a combination! what a prospect for the young Republic, thus beleaguered on all sides by assassins, ingrates and tyrants. But the Providential design involves a double test. Freedom is to be put to the trial, and at the same time all other forms of government are to be tested, and hence all the forces of Despotism on earth were made to strike hands against us. It is to be a European fight as well as an American. Thrones, and Nobility, and Privilege, and Monopoly are to go with Democracy into the dreadful scales, and hang poised between the two armies, so soon to shake the continent. It is to be the grand fight of the ages, the greatest of time, involving the most momentous issues, and deciding in the result the fate of the world and the race. The test is made thus severe, that there shall be no question as to the victory, whoever wins. The grandeur of the struggle hushes and awes the world. The eyes of all men, on all shores and lands, are anxiously turned to this land. In the farthest corner of the earth men ask how the great battle in America is going.

And the Republic is to stand alone, so far as material aid is concerned. We had friends, and they sent us precious words of sympathy and cheer—all they had to give. They came from the sister Republic of Switzerland, among the Alps; from the brave French Liberals, struggling for a fairer day under the shadow of Napoleon's throne; from young Italy, just risen from the grave of three hundred years; from Garibaldi and Hugo, and Kossuth—Hungary's exiled chief, slowly dying in London under the burden of his genius and his grief; from the starving weavers of Manchester and Birmingham, holding up their pale, thin hands to us across the water; from Goldwin Smith, and John Bright, and Richard Cobden, who

died, alas, before the sight, and went to join the martyred Lincoln and the hosts of heroes, who from our fields of sacrifice ascended to immortal fields of light and glory.

But not only were we to confront these fearful odds, but we were to be taken at a disadvantage and unprepared. Without an Army or Navy, without trained Generals, we must have what arms we had stolen by Floyd; our ships sent into distant seas by Toucey; Cobb was to rifle our treasury and destroy our credit; our mints were to be robbed, our forts and coast defences forcibly seized without opposition; in a word, the rebellion was to be fully matured and armed, and entrenched, before the Republic could strike a blow. Before the nation could get possession of their government, through their newly elected President, the rebellion was under full headway. The Convention of traitors at Montgomery had completed their work before Lincoln had started from Springfield, and their bastard flag floated over nearly every Fort on the Mississippi, on the Atlantic, and the Gulf. Beside, treason was everywhere—in the army, and navy, in all the departments at Washington, and all over the North. The pillars of the Union were falling in all directions, and everything seemed lost. Thus, in a single day, as if by magic, the people were confronted by this fearful spectre of revolt. Was it not appalling? When before in all history was a government put to such a test? What mortal man before, was ever called to such a task as Abraham Lincoln? What political pilot was ever hurried to the helm in such a storm? No wonder his aching heart cried out for Divine help, as he bid his neighbors good-bye at Springfield, which he was never to behold again on earth. No wonder the rebels were confident of success, and the English tories rubbed their hands with delight, and the friends of liberty everywhere stood aghast at the prospect. I have thus described, perhaps with tedious particularity, the circumstances of the commencement of the struggle, in order that you might comprehend the full proportions and magnitude of this tremendous trial. I believe this was all designed to magnify our victory, and make their defeat more overwhelming and eternal.

And now the gun was fired upon Sumter, whose echoes shook the world. It was the signal, and the awful grapple commenced. That shot produced an effect upon the North, of which the traitors little dreamed. They expected terror, and submission, and offers of compromise. But what a mistake! On the contrary, it broke

the lion slumber of the North and roused the people to a man. Then was seen that thrilling, that sublime "uprising of a great people," of which history has no parallel. In an instant the Nation sprung to its feet, with the war cry of the Revolution upon its lips, and rushed to the side of the government faster than the government could receive them. Party, sect, position, all conventional distinctions and divisions, were dissolved in a breath. Everything was forgotten in that burning hour—home, social ties, business, ease, wealth, love, life itself. How they rushed,—fathers, brothers, sons, and lovers, with hasty kiss and embrace, with hurried, tearful looks at the cradle, on into the smoke and flame of the battle ! Before July, 1861, two hundred thousand men were under arms and five hundred thousand, yes, a million would have been, had the government felt able to accept them. That magnificent outburst of courage and patriotism really decided the contest, for it showed that the Nation was sound at the core and its spirit invincible. From that hour the Nation never wavered in its faith of ultimate triumph.

In the beginning, both sides were confident of an early success. Perhaps a majority of the people believed that one year would see the end. But how mistaken we all were !

This war was a crucible, and we were to be held in it, until the dross of two hundred years had melted from our national life ; it was a revelator, and was to continue till liberty was fully illustrated, and oppression exposed to the very bottom ; it was a grapple of institutions on a continental field, with the world for spectators, and could not stop until the barbarism of the plantation, or the civilization of christianity, should prove the victor ; it was an avenger, and must go on until that gigantic system of iniquity from turret to basement was blown to atoms, and the desolation of retribution, like an ocean, was poured from the Potomac to the Gulf. And the war went on. Went on, until the demon spirit of the rebellion and the " sum of all villanies" had been fully manifested ; until they had trampled down the last vestige of personal liberty, and inaugurated the most remorseless of military despotisms ; until they had outstripped the excesses and atrocities of the French reign of terror in their treatment of loyal Unionists in Tennessee and the South West ; until they had starved and tortured to madness and death, sixty-four thousand prisoners of war, deliberately, and by system, and thus linked their cause forever with the loathsome infamy of Libby and Andersonville ; until they

had murdered our wounded, violated the graves and mutilated the bodies of our dead, and butchered in cold blood our colored troops, begging for mercy; until they had organized St. Albans' raids, the burning of hotels and theatres, and whole cities filled with women and children; until they had hired fiends and demons to scatter small pox and yellow fever throughout the whole land; until, finally, to cap the climax of all villainy, and excite the loathing and horror of the human race, they should assassinate the patriot Lincoln. What a sickening record of barbarism it is! Who ever dared to accuse slavery of such capacity for wickedness as this?

But the awful retributive vengeance of heaven was to follow. The war went on till their fields were desolated and their homes laid waste, their towns and cities bombarded and destroyed, their slaves set free, and three hundred thousand of the flower of the land were laid in bloody graves; went on, till King Cotton was dethroned, and they had humiliated themselves, in vain, at the foot of every throne in Europe, for help and recognition; until, oh, most exquisite punishment of all, they were compelled to kneel at the feet of their despised bondmen for help, and kneel there in vain; until every hope was blasted, and every reliance broken, and their entire property was destroyed, and they were swallowed up in utter, hopeless bankruptcy. By a careful calculation of the desolations of the war, reckoning the loss of slave property, loss of crops, what was sunk in the Confederate debt, and what they will be obliged to pay of our debt, it is estimated that they have lost nearly six thousand millions of dollars—lacking but one thousand million of the entire taxable property of the South before the war, which by the census of 1860, was seven thousand millions. These figures are terrible, and fully realize the prophecy of Lincoln in his Inaugural, that God would destroy every dollar made by slave labor, and take, drop by drop, all the blood drawn by the lash for two hundred years. In view of these dreadful punishments, who will dare again sneer at the "higher law of God?"

"Alas! alas! that great city Babylon; that mighty city, for in one hour is thy judgment come!"

But the war is to go on for us also. We would fain have accepted peace, but we could not. The war was making dreadful havoc all over the North. Thousands of shadowed, darkened homes; thousands of hearthstones flooded with blood; thousands of aching, bleeding hearts!

"Oh, the hearts that were broken with losses,
And weary with dragging the crosses,
Too heavy for mortals to bear."

How the leaden rain and iron hail went crashing through these Northern homes and hearts, making ghastly wounds, too deep for time to ever heal ! But there is no remission of sins, except by the shedding of blood. Before all salutations there must be Calvary—the cruel spear, the vinegar, and the gall, and nature's convulsive agonies. So with us. This terrible sacrifice must be made of the brave and noble, before the Genius of Liberty could burst the doors of that tomb in which its crucified body had been buried by the political Jews of America.

We must suffer. Blood must flow, treasure be wasted, failure and disaster be our portion too. We must be defeated at Big Bethel, routed at Bull Run, and tried to the last point of endurance by the Peninsular campaign, with its defeats, losses, and pro-slavery servilities. We must be humiliated and disgraced by the return of slaves to their rebel masters, who had brought us valuable information ; by the negro-hating orders of pro-slavery Generals—McClellan's brutal proclamation to the West Virginians ; Halleck's infamous order No. 3, and similar acts of Buell and others. For the first year the tide was against us. All this was necessary, it seems, to open our eyes, and bring the Nation to its senses, and make it strike the rebellion in its vital point. Our disasters became our teachers and accomplished what our justice failed to do. At last the fatal blow was struck, the great Proclamation of Freedom was issued, and our cause lifted into the splendor and smile of Heaven. For over a year we had been beaten and baffled. Lincoln saw in our defeats the wrath and judgments of God. He heard above all the roar of the stupendous conflict the command, "Let my people go." Lincoln saw the heavens gathering blackness for a wilder storm, and fiercer lightnings, and redder bolts. With sublime faith and courage he lifted against the charged clouds, a conductor made of four millions of broken fetters, and the bolts fell harmless at our feet. This was immediately after our victory at Antietam. It is true there followed the repulses of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, but these were the last, and were succeeded by the magnificent and decisive victories of Gettysburgh, and Vicksburg, lighting up on the same day our Northern and Southern sky with thrilling

splendor and sealing forever the fate of the rebellion. Chancellorsville was the last great victory of the rebellion. From that hour, victory steadily inclined to our side. The Proclamation of Freedom, which has immortalized the name of Lincoln, and ennobled the century, staggered the rebellion at home, and paralyzed it abroad. Notwithstanding the sneers of the shallow and ignorant, its effect was instant and immense. With mysterious velocity it flew through the South and kindled an unextinguishable fire in the rear of the rebel armies. Its light shot across the sky of Europe and gave our cause such sacred strength that foreign recognition of the rebels became impossible. It is now known that the Proclamation prevented recognition.

Beside, it gave our people a holy cause—adding the prayers of the slave to the thunder of our cannon. It inspired our armies with that mysterious might which comes from the consciousness of right, and dipped their bayonets in the magic of liberty.

Gettysburgh was the great pivotal battle of the war. On that immortal field, the prestige of Lee and his veterans was broken as with peals of thunder, thus ending the last invasion of the North. But the war still went on. Went on till our humanity had been tested, and illustrated in our treatment of rebel prisoners; in Sanitary and Christian Commissions; until the devotion and silent heroism of the women of the Republic had been manifested; until our statesmanship, our generalship, our heroism, our unparallelled resources and power, our financial capacity, our patience, our fidelity to the rights of man, were thoroughly tested; went on until the Negro was clothed with the uniform and grasped the bayonet of the Republic and had demonstrated his courage; had met his master and oppressor, face to face, with unflinching bravery on the field, and settled that question forever; went on till Grant had achieved that amazing campaign of the Mississippi, fighting against fortifications all the way, clearing the great river to the Gulf of the rebel hordes; until the stalwart Butler, at New Orleans, had taught the Nation the only way to govern a rebel city, and that those who trample upon the flag ought to die, as Cromwell taught England that kings had a joint in their necks; until glorious Joe Hooker had stormed Lookout Mountain, five hundred feet in the air, and thundered defiance above the clouds; until the heroic Sherman had marched from Chattanooga to Atlanta, driving Johnson out of twenty-five fortified strongholds in

the fastnesses of Northern Georgia, and then, with his triumphant legions, cutting that swath of fire sixty miles wide through the heart of the Confederacy, to the sea. The war went on, until old Farragut, lashed to the main-mast of the Hartford, had plowed his way through the boiling surges of Mobile to the gates of the city; until the dazzling Sheridan had sent Early "whirling through Winchester," and retaken the valley of the Shenandoah, and, finally, until the grand hour of indomitable Grant and the Republic had come, and he had burst through the defences of Petersburgh, and hurled those Potomac veterans and heroes upon Lee and Richmond, crushing treason and slavery forever, amid wildest cheers and pealing thunders of cannon.

One other trial, perhaps the greatest after all, I cannot pass over. In the Summer of 1864, before Sherman had reached Atlanta, and before the victories of the Valley, the canvass of the presidential election was opened. As the canvass progressed, the danger of our situation grew more and more palpable and grave, till at last the hearts of the most sanguine were sick with fear.

A popular election in time of peace is a severe trial. It is in fact the constant and peculiar peril of Republics. It is the one trial which the popular experiments of the past, were unable to stand. But a general election in the midst of a gigantic civil war, in which thirty States and thirty millions of people were engaged—that was a spectacle which this earth never beheld before, and probably never will again. We had a half a million of men in the front, and the line of battle stretched nearly across the continent. We were spending three millions of dollars a day, and taxes were increasing, and the mountain of debt piling up higher and higher every hour. That nothing should be wanting to make the situation as trying and critical as possible, a draft was impending and actually in progress, to fill up the fearful gaps which the growing fury and crisis of the conflict were making. Besides, the election involved the removal of the Commander-in-Chief of our armies, and an entire change of the programme of the war. In fact, the issue distinctly presented by the Chicago Convention, was "an immediate cessation of hostilities." The rebels on both sides of the line, comprehended, at once, the peril and the opportunity.

Here was a chance to get rid of Lincoln and elect in his place a President, who, if he did not agree with them, would at least adopt a different tone and policy. Any one was preferable to that

wise, and devoted, and unconquerable man, who had thus far baffled all their plans and hopes. Here was a chance to assail the government, to attack our generals, to show that our victories were barren, our sufferings and losses useless, our taxes enormous, our drafts unconstitutional, our sons being murdered by abolition fanatics, and the war continued to enrich corrupt officials and favorites. This would demoralize the army, dishearten the generals, alarm capitalists, divide and confuse the people, produce tumult and riot, and overwhelm us all beneath the waves of defeat and anarchy. And to put the result beyond all doubt, a soldier should be nominated to dazzle and mislead the people against a plain civilian—an old trick of despots and demagogues. It was plainly a rebel flank movement. I do not mean that all those who voted that ticket were disloyal. By no manner of means. Thousands of patriotic and loyal, though mistaken men, voted it, yet the purposes of the rebels and the leaders were too manifest.

Now, Fellow Citizens, stop a moment and look at that peril. It makes us shudder now to think of it. This was the supreme crucial test of the Republic. It never had been applied before on this earth. To pass through it required the greatest calmness, steadiness, intelligence, patriotism, and courage. It demanded rarer qualities than any which the trial of battle involved.

Thus we stood, through that terrible Summer and Autumn, fighting a double battle—a battle in the front with bayonets, a battle in the rear with ballots, and liable to defeat in both, and yet lost forever, if we failed in either. Two battles proceeding at the same time—one a battle of bullets, and cannon balls, and shells, the other, a battle whose “weapons were thoughts, whose shells were firey inspirations of truth, and whose sword was the spirit of a just God.” Tell me if that was not the crowning test of man’s capacity for self-government? Tell me if there was not crowded into that trial, every doubt, every cavil, every peril, and exigency and strain, which all the tyrants and tories of all ages have ever suggested or imagined? If we can pass this, we can pass anything, and everything, which time and tyranny can bring in the future.

Well, the election came; you remember it well, and cannot soon forget it. How the storm of denunciation burst upon the President, the Government, the Generals, the Army! How the copperheads hissed! What tricks, what vile arts, what forgeries of soldiers’ votes, living and dead! What plots at Niagara, and of

the "Knights of the Golden Circle," what appeals to fear, avarice, love of plunder and office! What a wild, hideous carnival of disloyalty and demagogueism it was! The winds of discussion were all let loose, and the tempest raged with unchecked fury. You do not forget this. And you remember in contrast, the sublime conduct of the loyal millions—their solemn religious earnestness, their courage and self-command, their sacrifice of party ties and interests, their invincible intelligence, and their grand fidelity to the Republic. To complete the wonder and grandeur of the scene, the soldiers in the ranks voted in the pauses of the battle, holding the bayonet in one hand and the ballot in the other—thus smiting a traitor with each hand.

The battle of the ballot was won. The soldiers and the people were one. The ballot supported the bayonet and the bayonet protected the ballot. The thunder of the Electoral Urns answered back the roar of the cannon, and mingled in one mighty diapason of joy and triumph. That shattered the Rebellion everywhere—smiting Richmond, London and Paris at the same moment, with mortal fear and dismay. That awed the world with a new revelation of popular might, and will yet change every government on the face of the earth.

After this, our Eagles flew to victory, crash following crash in rapid succession, until the final explosion at Richmond.

It is over. Aristocracy and despotism are overwhelmed. The greatest conspiracy of history against Free Institutions and the progress of mankind, is annihilated. The eleventh century crumbles before the nineteenth. The Slave Ship yields to the May Flower. Plymouth conquers Jamestown. The Barbarism of the Plantation kneels to the Christian civilization of the Puritans. Once again the Cavalier flies before the Puritan, as his ancestors two hundred years before on the fields of Marston Moor and Nasby, showed their silken backs to Cromwell. The trial and test of two hundred years is over. The great Republic, tried by fire, saddened and chastened by the conflict, but terrible and glorious, ascends through smoke and flame to unending sway and splendor.

And the Despots of Europe have failed. They see that Democracy is vindicated and established. As the thunder of our triumph goes crashing over their thrones, their alarm is manifest. Already the signs and sounds of popular reaction and revolt hurtle through the air. Not many years will pass, before those thrones will ex-

plode again in fragments against the sky, as in '48, and the wild waves of Democracy roll from the Bay of Biscay to the feet of the Czar.

Then "We will mock when their fear cometh, when their fear cometh as desolation, and their destruction cometh as a whirlwind." Let us wait and see.

And the copperheads; they have failed, and now pass from the contempt of the present to the eternal scorn and execration of history—"the natural scourge of tyrants and traitors." And the leaders, where are they?—the Woods, the Vallandighams, the Ingersolls, the Touceys, the Seymours,—always excepting the brave General Seymour of Williamstown, who fought with sword and vote for the Republic, and did fatal execution with both? Where are these leaders? Their bones now whiten the shores of our history, like the wrecks after a storm at sea, and future historians will search for them, as curious specimens of the monsters of this age, as geologists now hunt for Mastadons and other monstrosities of former periods.

But enough of these creatures. The woe is past. The fevered lips of the cannon are cooled and still. "The noise of the Captains and the shouting," fades and dies away, leaving the battle fields of the gigantic conflict to the tender, pathetic moonlight and starlight—to the awful silences and eternities.

And now behold the return of the sunburnt heroes of liberty to the homes they have saved, and the welcome and gratitude they deserve. On they come, thousands upon thousands, from immortal fields of victory, covered with glory, throbbing with pride and joy; on, with flashing bayonets, swelling music, banners "torn but flying;" on, through thronging, rejoicing millions, through "earthquake shouts of victory," through flowers and wreaths and arches, through tears and joy, and blessings unutterable. Some are with us to-day.

Soldiers of the Republic, in the name of the people, I bid you welcome! welcome from the deadly conflict to this peace and joy. You and your comrades have borne our conquering Eagles to the noblest victories ever achieved by men. Through what storm of shot and shell and sabre stroke, through what sheeted flame and smoke, over what blazing ramparts, into what deadly breaches and on what red and slippery decks, you have followed that radiant flag, I lack words to describe. We have read and heard of the

daring and devotion of all the glorious sons of this old Pilgrim State. Among the miracles and glories of this wonderful war, none are greater than the part this State has played and the valor of her sons. Everywhere her sons have "crowded the road to death as to a festival." You come back covered with the glory of many fields,—from Roanoke Island, and Newbern, from the Peninsular, from Antietam, Gettysburg, New Orleans, from the Wilderness, the Shenandoah, Petersburg and Richmond. You have marched and fought under Butler, Banks, Burnside, McClellan, Meade, Grant, Sherman and Sheridan. What scenes, what battles, what carnage, what heroism, what suffering, what defeats and what victories you have witnessed! What memories and emotions you must have? In the name of the people, I thank you.

But alas, you are not all here. Many who went out with you brave and blooming and buoyant with high hopes, are absent. Some sleep beside the James, some by the Shenandoah, some lie in the crowded grave-yards of the Wilderness and some beneath the ocean wave, and some sank beneath the slow tortures of Rebel prisons. Heroes and martyrs all, who gave their young lives and bright hopes a willing sacrifice on the altar of God and their country. With what precious blood our sins are purged away!

"Oh, never shall the land forget
How gushed the life-blood of her brave,
Gushed warm with hope and courage yet,
Upon the soil they fought to save."

And they shall not be forgotten. Oh, Genius of History drop not from thy tablets a single one of these honorable names!

They are gone, "passed to where beyond these voices there is peace." No battles there, nor cannon's roar, but only rest. They have gone to softer airs, greener fields, bluer skies, to the Heaven of heroes and martyrs—

"The sweet fields of Eden,
Where there's rest for the weary."

And there, too, has gone the noble, martyred Lincoln. He has joined the great army of heroes and patriots. And never passed to that "home of the blest," a purer, manlier spirit. How patient, how wise, how firm, how honest, how heroic, how gentle, how good he was? How that life should lift us all to serener heights of vision and courage! How it shows the grandeur of fidelity and its reward! Who, four years ago, suspected in that plain son of

the Prairies, a Statesman and National Savior, whose fame should eclipse all mortal fame except that of Washington? How all the statesmanship of craft and selfishness fades and becomes folly and failure, beside this masterly leadership of honesty and common sense! And is this not the explanation and secret of it all,—that his purity and devotion to truth put him in the current of historic tendency, which is after all, Providential purpose, and thus he was illuminated and energized with Divine light and power.

“Lincoln! when men would name a man
Who wrought the great work of his age,
Who fought, and fought the noblest fight,
And marshalled it from stage to stage,

Victorious out of dusk and dark,
And into dawn and on till day,
Most humble when the paens rang,
Least rigid when the enemy lay

Prostrate for his feet to tread—
This name of Lincoln will they name,

* * * * *

Lincoln! the man who freed the slave;
Lincoln! whom never self-enticed;
Slain Lincoln, worthy found to die
A soldier of his Captain, Christ.”

And now, Fellow Citizens, what of the future? The fiery trial of the Sword is passed, and now comes the trial of Peace and Reconstruction. We have made the Negro a man and a citizen, shall he now enjoy the rights and privileges which belong to manhood and citizenship? Shall he have the ballot?

The right to vote is a part of American liberty, because experience has demonstrated that it is necessary to protect and preserve that liberty. Hence, we give it to all without distinction—native and foreign, rich and poor, learned and unlearned. The theory and philosophy of American liberty is peculiar and differs from all others. The doctrine of English liberty, is, that it is a grant from the Crown, either voluntary or forced. But the theory of the Declaration of Independence is that every man is BORN free and equal and entitled by NATURE to his rights. Hence, a man has a right to freedom BECAUSE HE IS A MAN. It follows, that if he has a natural right to liberty, he has a right to whatever is necessary to preserve it! Now, does the black man need the ballot? Is it necessary to preserve that freedom he has earned and we have given him? I say

we have already answered that question by all our history and practice. Do you need it? Do the white men need it? Does the poor man need it to protect him against capital and power, and to secure education for his children? Who would consider himself safe without it? But if this is true of the white here, how much more is it necessary to protect the black man in the conquered States? He is there a prey to the old spirit of oppression, exposed to prejudice, hate and revenge. He is without land, without the means of education, without rights in the Courts—utterly at the mercy of his former master. Do you doubt what the master will do? Without the ballot, the Proclamation will be but a mockery at last. I know that in some of the Northern States the Negro is unjustly deprived of the ballot. It is said, can we insist that the Southern States shall treat the Negro better than we do? I answer that the cases are not analogous. If Ohio, Oregon, and New York had been in rebellion and struck at the Nation's life as the Southern States have, and stood waiting for restoration to their old relations in the Union, as these rebellious States now do, then the claim to treat all alike would be valid. But we have no power over these Northern States. The State fence is erected and the Nation cannot pass it. But not so with the Rebel States. The door is closed to their old positions in the Union, and Congress must act, and therefore can insist upon such ameliorations and changes as will harmonize these States with the new spirit of the Republic, and make their incorporation into the Union compatible with the safety and peace of the Nation. Why then cite past mistakes against the performance of present duty and justice? But does the Negro deserve it? Can there be but one answer to this? Does heroism and devotion constitute a claim? No man now is mean enough to deny these to the Negro. They have been tested too thoroughly at Fort Pillow, Port Hudson, Miliken's Bend, Fort Wagner, and at Petersburg. Is fidelity a test? He has been faithful from first to last. The uniform testimony of our soldiers is, that whenever they met a black face they found a friend, and that in every white face they found a foe. He has piloted our ships, guided our generals in unknown paths, brought us rebel plots and plans, and has led our starved, flying prisoners through swamps and forests to home and safety. He has been constantly loyal to our cause, and given us all he had—his devotion and his life. He has carried our bayonet, he ought to have the ballot.

We give it to the traitor, shall we deny it to the loyal? We give it to those who have done their best to murder the Nation, shall we deny it to those who have shed their blood to save it? We give it to those who have tortured and starved our heroes, shall we deny it to those who gave them food and succor? We asked him to desert his master and meet him in battle, when he knew and we knew that if taken prisoner, he would receive no quarter. Can we be so false as to leave him to the tender mercies of that master? In the presence of these judgments of Heaven, in view of that desolated South, yet smoking with the vengeance of God for trampling upon his poor and lowly, dare we reorganize and again put these stricken and defenceless millions beneath the feet of those remorseless man-stealers. Before we do it, let us remember that there is a God of Justice, and that the weakest black hand in the Carolinas uplifted in prayer to that God, may call down a power "in the midst of which the iron hearts of your warriors shall be turned into ashes."

But the Negro is ignorant, it is said. Granted. So are thousands of those poor whites to whom the ballot is to be given, and that, too, after they have proved themselves unfit for the trust. He is ignorant, but he knew enough to be loyal, while his master did not. Such ignorance is safer than such intelligence, and a loyal black is better always than a white traitor.

But it is a State affair and we have no right to dictate to these States their laws. In reply, I say, we do dictate and keep dictating every day. The President already has said who of the whites shall vote and who shall not—can't he say who of the blacks shall vote, as well? Remember that now the black is a citizen and a portion of the people whose "consent" is necessary, according to the Declaration, to the "just powers" of all governments. Why, the other day, the President told the South Carolina Delegation that they must abolish slavery and adopt the constitutional amendment before they could come back, and I was glad he told them so. But where did he get the right to do that? What do you call that but dictation, and that of the rankest kind? That goes a long way beyond the question of suffrage. That dictates upon the whole subject matter of State and domestic legislation. If he can do that, could he not say that they could not come back till they had allowed a portion of the blacks to vote—those who owned land, have fought for the Union and can read and write—and made provision

for the ultimate admission of all to the elective franchise? The President appoints Governors for the Southern States. But, under the Constitution, the people have a right to elect their own Governors. Have these offices been declared vacant by any constitutional authority? Not in a single instance. You see the constitutional difficulties which surround any action. The truth is the President has acted for the safety of the Nation and done what seemed necessary for the future peace and interests of the people.

But, Fellow Citizens, if we are indifferent to the claims of justice, we **MUST** listen to the demands of interest and danger. We stand now to this question precisely as we stood to the Proclamation. We hesitated and held back in the same way, until our own safety extorted it. The Proclamation was issued to accomplish our victory. We must now grant the ballot to preserve it. So you see that injustice is dangerous as well as vile. If we deny the Negro the ballot, we give every Southern State into the complete control of the traitors. Besides, by abolishing slavery, the three-fifths representation is abolished also, and every slave will count as one man, and not as three-fifths of a man, as before. This will increase just so much the basis of representation and add thirteen Representatives to the present number in the National Congress. Thus, the abolition of slavery will increase the political power of the Southern States, and if there is no offset, if the Negro is disfranchised, the entire political power of the South greatly augmented, passes at once into those bloody hands, not yet washed, which have for four years been madly attempting the destruction of the Republic. Thirteen additional Representatives, and no constituency! Thirteen more votes given to traitors, fresh from slaughter, murder, piracy and arson, and not one vote to the dumb and loyal millions who helped us to victory? Are we mad? Now see the danger. When these States are once admitted and the military rule is removed, as it will and must be, then what will be our situation? At once a party will be formed to **REPUDIATE** your **NATIONAL DEBT** or assume the debt of the Confederacy; to defeat the Constitutional Amendment; repeal all Confiscation Laws and all laws punishing Treason, not to mention other manifest destinies in the distance.

Do you think this fear excessive and visionary? Have you forgotten the Chicago Convention and that infamous platform, "that the war was a failure and that immediate steps should be taken to cease hostilities?" Have you forgotten that this Convention ut-

tered this in the dead lock of our struggle and in the hearing of both armies, when such words were worth thousands of men and hundreds of cannon to the traitors? The gallant Sherman and his Western heroes at that very moment were standing with bare and bleeding breasts before the blazing lines of Atlanta. It is true that they failed. It is true that the echoes of the hammer which nailed together the planks of that platform, had hardly died away, before Sherman blew it to pieces with the guns which took Atlanta. But if a party could be formed then, who such an idiot as not to see that the traitors could form a more formidable Northern alliance, when they can enter the political field as of old, with the entire Southern vote largely increased in their hands. The danger is palpable, unavoidable, immense. Shall these traitors secure by fraud what they failed to grasp by the sword? Shall politicians gamble away the grandest achievement of the age? Shall eternal justice and national safety be sacrificed to legal quibbles and pro-slavery constitutional traditions and constructions? Most certainly this will follow, if the Rebels come back to power upon a white basis of reconstruction. Again the Nation must hasten to cover itself with the shield of justice and give the Negro the ballot, as once before it gave him the bayonet to save itself from destruction.

Alas, Fellow Citizens, that there should be any necessity for such a discussion as this, on such a day. Our joy is so sweet and deep, that it is sad to mix it with this bitter. But deep joy is often, if not always fearful, and drugged with dread. This is a day for truth and not for empty brag and lies, as in the past. Too long on this day have we boasted of our health, when the "whole head was sick and the whole heart was faint." Too long have we covered the crater of the volcano with flowers. It is high time to speak the truth. We stand now just as the Fathers stood in 1787. They had just emerged from a long war, worn and wasted with the conflict, and longed for peace and union. Carolina and Georgia clamored for the interests and rights of the slave-masters, and the protection of State sovereignty. In vain the sagacious and faithful friends of liberty plead for the rights of human nature and interposed the sacred principles of the Declaration, so freshly asserted. They were stigmatized as agitators and fanatics, who were never satisfied and always making trouble, and so the conservatives and materialists had their way, and justice was disregarded. They had their way then, but justice and retribution have had their ter-

rible way since. Were the conservatives of '87 wise statesmen, when they undertook to build the State upon the quicksands of injustice and compromise? Did it stand when the rains descended and the floods came? Shall we build upon the sand again? Shall we not rather build upon the rock, the everlasting rock of Justice, against which all the storms of time and treason shall beat in vain? Remember what is done, must be done now. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." If this opportunity is once lost, fifty years may not recover it. There are three things, you know, which never come back,—the spoken word the sped arrow, and the lost opportunity.

"Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falshood, for the good or evil side ;
Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep upon the right,
And the choice goes by forever, 'twixt that darkness and that light."

This is the most precious hour of this century, for it has in it years and ages and the endless future. We stand in the presence of the world, and before a cloud of witnesses waiting to see whether we mean to "palter in a double sense—to keep the word of promise to the ear and break it to the hope," knowing well that desertion of the Negro now, would be a more fatal mistake and crime than his original enslavement, because it would add to the guilt of injustice the baseness of ingratitude. Oh, could we ask those who have fallen, those whose blood will cry from the ground if the traitors who murdered them are permitted to revive under new forms the old kingdom of oppression, what do you think would be the response? I have felt all day, as though the spirits of the departed were hovering around us. On the soft South wind I seem to hear, above the roar of the cannon, a murmur of voices. They come from the fields of martyrdom and glory—from the Mississippi, the Atlantic, the tropic shores, from Vicksburg, Chattanooga, Mobile, Newbern, Gettysburgh, the Wilderness, Richmond. They whisper in mournful tones that they died for all, that the blood of white and black flowed and mingled in the strife, and that now they stand together in fraternal union in the courts above, before the common Father and Savior. I cannot believe that justice will be defeated. I cannot believe that the warnings of history and the instructions of these four terrible years, and these shadows huge and dreadful, now stealing over the "troubled mirror of the Republic," are to be disregarded. It must be that the

foundations of the New Era will be laid, not upon privilege, and color, and caste, and crime, and ignorance, but upon the indestructible basis of the rights of man—the equality of all men before the law, and equal suffrage without distinction of race or color.

When that is done the victory will be complete. When that is done America will have satisfied the waiting hopes of humanity.

Then, and not till then, shall come rest and peace.

Then shall come the reunion and clasping of hands of the warring sections.

Then shall come again the music of waving grain and the “sweet oblivion of flowers” above the desolated fields of the war.

Then shall come the dream of the Fathers—the ocean-bound, continental, imperial Republic, majestic and free, with no master and no slave from shore to shore. And in the midst of that transcendent joy, the Genius of Liberty shall stand, with her feet upon broken fetters, in her hands the Declaration of Independence and the Proclamation of Freedom, while above her head shall burn with insufferable splendor “the gorgeous ensign of the Republic.”



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